

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AF-10 NEA-10 DRC-01 /125 W

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R 210738Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7609

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0181

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UNGA BM

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF 28TH UNGA

REF: (A) STATE 250152 (B) USUN 5723; JIC) USUN 5727;
(D) STATE A-010458

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAD LITTLE COMMENT ON CURRENT UNGA TRENDS, BUT DEPLORED TENDENCY TO BLOC VOTING. GUB TENDS TO AGREE WITH MUCH OF USG POSITION AS PRESENTED REFS. AT SAME TIME, GUB FEELS ITSELF UNABLE TO INFLUENCE TREND, AND ITS CONCERN TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES USUALLY INHIBITS IT FROM MAKING USE OF MODEST INFLUENCE WHICH IT MIGHT EXERCISE. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF JAN. 18 DISCUSSED UNGA TRENDS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL (U KYAW, DIRECTOR, UN DIVISION), LEAVING AIDE-MEMOIRE BASED ON PORTIONS OF REFS. CONVERSATION FOCUSED MAINLY ON BUDGET INCREASES AND TREND TOWARD BLOC VOTING. ON FORMER SUBJECT (REF D) U KYAW HAD NO SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT.

3. ON LATTER TOPIC, U KYAW SAID GUB, THOUGH NATURALLY SHARING VIEWS OF NON-ALIGNED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON MANY ISSUES, MAKES INDEPENDENT DECISIONS AND ALSO REGRETS TREND TO BLOC VOTING WHICH
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IS ENCOURAGED BY ONE-COUNTRY ONE-VOTE SYSTEM. CAMBODIAN REPRE-

SENTATION VOTE WAS AN EXAMPLE; IN THIS INSTANCE GUB WAS IMPRESSED BY ARGUMENT THAT QUESTION PRIMARILY ONE FOR COUNTRIES OF REGION. THERE WAS SENTIMENT AT WORKING LEVEL OF FOREIGN MINISTRY OF VOTING IN FAVOR OF DEFERMENT, BUT FINAL DECISION WAS TO ABSTAIN. AT ALGIERS, GUB HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO ENTER RESERVATIONS TO "CONSENSUS" ON CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION. U KYAW DID NOT SAY SO, BUT WE UNDERSTAND FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT BURMESE UNGA DELEGATION WAS INSTRUCTED TO EXPRESS SIMILAR BURMESE RESERVATION IF GRUNK HAD BEEN SEATED.

4. U KYAW NOTED AFRICAN PROPENSITY TO BLOC VOTING, AND REMARKED THAT WHILE THIS TENDENCY UNDESIRABLE IT WAS ALSO UNDERSTANDABLE IN LIGHT OF AFRICANS' GROWING FRUSTRATION WITH LACK OF PROGRESS ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES WHICH RENDERED THEM VULNERABLE TO INCITEMENT FROM "OTHER QUARTERS" MEANING, IN CONTEXT, SOVIET BLOC. EMBOFF MADE POINT THAT THIS AFRICAN TENDENCY SELF-DEFEATING; AS RESOLUTIONS BECOME EVER MORE MILITANT THEY BECOME MORE UNENFORCEABLE. U KYAW REITERATED BURMESE DISTASTE FOR UNGA DECISIONS BEING STEAMROLLED THROUGH BY AFRO-ARAB MAJORITY, BUT SAW NO WAY IN WHICH SMALL COUNTRY SUCH AS BURMA COULD INFLUENCE TREND.

5. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR ASIAN CAUCUS EMERGING, HE SAID FURTHER INFORMAL ASIAN MDNSULTATIONS LIKELY IN NEXT UNGA BECAUSE OF NUMEROUS AGENDA ITEMS OF SPECIAL REGIONAL INTEREST (E.G., CAMBODIAN REPRESENTATION, KOREA, INDIAN OCEAN NEUTRALIZATION, POSSIBLY MALACCA STRAITS).

6. COMMENT: GUB WOULD AGREE WITH MUCH OF USG POSITION AS PRESENTED REFS, NOTABLY ON SUCH ISSUES AS BUDGETARY RESTRAINT, BLOC VOTING, AND NEED FOR CONSENSUS ON MOST ISSUES. BURMESE OFFICIALS ALSO SOMETIMES EXPRESS DISTAIN FOR THE LARGELY MEANINGLESS TALK WHICH OCCUPIES INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME AT UNGA (AND OTHER UN BODIES), IN CONTRAST TO SMALL AMOUNT OF ACTION. (DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, WHO WAS MEMBER OF GUB DELEGATION TO 28TH UNGA, HAD VOLUNTEERED SUCH COMMENT TO CHARGE A FEW DAYS EARLIER.) ON THE OTHER HAND, U KYAW'S COMMENT ABOUT INABILITY TO INFLUENCE TREND ACCURATELY MIRRORS BURMESE RESIGNATION ON THIS SUBJECT. IN ADDITION, GUB CONCERN TO AVOID INVOLVING ITSELF IN CONTROVERSIAL

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ISSUES USUALLY PREVENTS IT FROM MAKING USE OF THE MODEST INFLUENCE WHICH IT COULD EXERCISE AS A COUNTRY WHOSE NEUTRALIST AND NON-ALIGNED POSITION IS OF LONG STANDING AND ACTUALLY CONFORMS TO THE MEANING OF TERM "NON-ALIGNED."
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